

MANUAL (Suzanne Bloom / Ed Hill)

... and Books

AND

A Tribute to MANUAL 1974 – 2004

February 24 – March 31, 2018

Reception for the artists Saturday, February 24, 5-7 pm

Artists Talk Saturday, February 24, 5 pm

Moody Gallery is pleased to present *... and Books*, an elegantly dynamic exhibition of new work by MANUAL (Ed Hill and Suzanne Bloom). The duo, pioneers in the fields of digital and conceptual photography, ply their considerable masterly skills to create one, unified vision using an impressive variety of staging and synthesizing techniques, both with and without books as their primary focus.

Books are pictured singly, doubly (including recto/verso pairs); in triplets, groups, stacks or piles; and, range in scale from monumental (*Rembrandt in Gold and Black*, 60" x 40") to intimate (*Shakespeare's Ghost*, 15" x 20"). Their modes of expression are equally diverse, running the gamut from elegiac to ironic, poignant to political, humorous and playful to informed and selectively detailed. Nonetheless, through all of these color reigns supreme.

The photographs in the show in which books are absent may be fewer in number, but they are equally and even more emphatically iconic. In the absence of books we find natural materials (sticks and stones) or ordinary recyclable materials (packing and wrapping paper) transformed into surprisingly suggestive, anthropomorphic forms. This is perhaps comforting to our human nature, but in a gesture of strategic irony, MANUAL has intentionally led us into a conundrum. To what, exactly, does the ellipsis in the title, *... and Books*, refer?

Their answer is, "Taken in the context of *Books*, each viewer is invited to connect those elliptical dots and fill in what is unsaid through her/his own creative imagination." Thus MANUAL offers the viewer an active role in resolving the specific conundrum in this exhibition — between artwork and title — but also, more broadly, the challenge inherent in the act of interpreting a work of art. In addition to the exhibition of their current work, *... and Books*, Betty Moody has selected an accompanying exhibition, *A Tribute to MANUAL*, which features key pieces created between 1974 and 2004, examples from distinct series representing milestones of MANUAL's early career: *Art in Context*, *Men and Women*, *VIDEOLOGY*, *FOREST\PRODUCTS*, and *A Constructed Forest*.

Bloom and Hill are the recipients of numerous grants, including four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships. Their photographs, videos, multimedia projects and installations have been shown widely, both internationally and throughout the United States. Their work is represented in many permanent private and public collections including major museums in New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Hanover, NH and Houston, where they are notably well established. A retrospective of their work, *MANUAL: Two Worlds, The Collaboration of Ed Hill*

and Suzanne Bloom, organized by the International Center of Photography and shown there in 2002, was exhibited in an expanded form at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in 2004. Their first exhibition at the MFAH, *Suzanne Bloom and Ed Hill (MANUAL): Research and Collaboration*, took place in 1980. FOREST\PRODUCTS, an extensive experimental multimedia installation, was mounted at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, in 1992.

The exhibitions *...and Books* and *A Tribute to MANUAL* will be on view at Moody Gallery February 24 through March 31, concurrent with the FotoFest 2018 Biennial. A reception for the artists will be held Saturday, February 24 from 5:00 - 7:00 PM. In addition, on that same day, there will be an Artists Talk at 5:00 PM.

Moody Gallery is located at 2815 Colquitt, Houston, Texas 77098. The gallery hours are Tuesday through Friday 10:30-5:00 PM, and Saturday, 11:00 - 5:00 PM. For more information, please contact Moody Gallery at 713-526-9911 or by email at infor@moodygallery.com.